

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LILONG 00508 010122Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----010159Z 116135 /72-73

R 311100Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY LILONGWE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 767  
AMCONSIL CAPE TOWN  
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM  
AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

S E C R E T LILONGWE 0508

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, RH  
SUBJECT: REVEREND SITHOLE AND BISHOP MUZOREWA TO CONFER WITH  
PRESIDENT BANDA

REF: A. STATE 061186 B. LILONGWE 388 C. LUSAKA 0820

PRESIDENT BANDA ASKED SEE ME IN ZOMBA YESTERDAY TO DISCUSS  
U.S. REACTION DR. GABELLAH'S REQUEST REPORTED REF B. (WE TALKED  
1 1/2 HOURS - MOSTLY I LISTENED). I ASSURED HIM OF DEPT.S  
APPRECIATION FOR HISTHOUGHTFUL OBSERVATIONS AND THEN MADE POINTS  
COVERED IN PARA. 2, REF A. BANDA PAUSED FOR MOMENT AND THEN  
REMARKED HE HAD LATER LEARNED GABELLAH HAD NOT DISCUSSED HIS IDEAS  
WITH THE BISHOP. AS ILLUSTRATION OF "POTENTIAL PITFALLS" I GAVE  
HIM COPY OF LUSAKA'S CABLE REPORTING SITHOLE DECLARATION MADE  
THERE (REF C). HE READ CABLE VERY CAREFULLY AND WITH OBVIOUS  
INTEREST AND THEN REMARKED "THIS IS ALL ABSOLUTELY CORRECT - I  
KNEW IT BEFORE OF COURSE - BUT THIS IS A VERY ACCURATE REPORT.  
YOU WILL BE INTERESTED TO KNOW THAT SITHOLE IS COMING HERE ON  
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FRIDAY AND MUZOREWA ON SUNDAY."

BANDA THEN WENT ON TO TELL ME "IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE" THAT  
SITHOLE IS COMING HERE TO TALK WITH A SMITH REPRESENTATIVE ABOUT  
THE POSSUBILITY THAT HE MIGHT RETURN TO RHODESIA TO HOLD A  
CONFERENCE WITH HIS ZANU SUPPORTERS AT WHICH HE WOULD "RENOUNCE  
VIOLENCE" AND "DECLARE HIS SUPPORT FOR ANEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT".

SMITH REP HERE AS RESULT BANDA'S APPEAL ON SITHOLE' BEHALF. SMITH DID NOT REJECT POSSIBILITY BUT INDICATED DESIRE FOR PRIOR DISCUSSION SITHOLE TO BE SURE THEY HAD ACCURATE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING.

IN ONE OF SEVERAL ASIDES (INCLUDING A 15 MINUTE LUCID SYNOPSIS OF THE HISTORY OF THE AME CHURCH IN THE U.S. AND AFRICA WHICH CAME FROM MY QUESTION IF SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA OF SAME DENOMINATION - HE DID NOT KNOW) BANDA REMARKED THAT SMITH AT LAST IS ACTING HONESTLY; THAT HE HAD NEVER LIKED HIM BEFORE BUT THE RECENT REFORM OF THE LAND TENURE ACT HAS CONVINCED HIM SMITH IS SERIOUS; AND THAT FROM HIS PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE WHITE RHODESIAN LEADERS GOING BACK MANY YEARS HE CONSIDERS THIS REFORM MOST SIGNIFICANT.

BANDA SAID MUZOREWA IS COMING HERE AT BANDA'S REQUEST BECAUSE HE WANTS TO TALK WITH HIM AND TRY TO LEARN WHAT HE HAS IN MIND. MUZOREWA'S BIG TROUBLE HE SAID IS THAT HE CANNOT MAKE A DECISION AND HIS VIEWS ARE THOSE OF LAST MAN HE TALKS TO. OBSERVED THAT MUZOREWA'S FOLLOWING GAINED BY VIRTUE OF CIRCUMSTANCE AND NOT DUE TO HIS OWN ABILITIES AS LEADER; THAT IN ANY OPEN COMPETITION WITH SITHOLE OR NKOMO ON RHODESIAN HOME GROUNDS HE BELIEVES BISHOP WOULD QUICKLY FOLD.

I ASKED IF SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA WERE GOING TO GET TOGETHER HERE TO TRY TO RESOLVE THEIR DIFFERENCES. BANDA SAID THIS NOT CONTEMPLATED. HE THEN ASKED ME WHAT WE WOULD LIKE HIM TO SAY TO BOTH MEN. TOLD HIM I WAS WITHOUT ANY INSTRUCTIONS EXCEPT FOR REMARKS I HAD MADE EARLIER BUT OBSERVED CERTAINLY IN SECRET

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INTERESTS OF THE NATIONALISTS TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES AND PRESENT UNITED FRONT IN NEGOTIATIONS. AT CLOSE OF CONVERSATION SOME TIME LATER HE RETURNED TO THIS SUBJECT AND SAID HE WILL URGE BOTH MEN TO MEND THEIR FENCES AND WORK TOGETHER. IF ANYTHING SIGNIFICANT COMES FROM SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA VISITS HE SAID HE WOULD INFORM ME.

AT ONE POINT I ASKED BANDA IF PRESIDENT KAUNDA WOULD NOT BE VERY ANNOYED WITH SITHOLE FOR HIS LUSAKA BLAST. BANDA MERELY OBSERVED THAT KAUNDA HAD MADE THE GREAT MISTAKE OF ALLOWING HIS LONG-TIME PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP WITH NKOMO TO AFFECT HIS POLITICAL JUDGMENT.

BANDA AT CLOSE OF CONVERSATION ASKED TO BE SURE THAT I HAD INFORMED DEPT. OF ERRONEOUS REPORT HE HAD GIVEN ME RE DEATH KATIKAZA. SAID THIS HAD COME TO HIM FROM SOUTH AFRICANS. S.A. NOW HAS MANY PORTUGUESE REFUGEES FROM MOZAMBIQUE AND HE SPECULATES REPORT PRODUCT THEIR "WISHFUL THINKING". ALSO NOTED THIS IS THIRD YEAR HE HAS BEEN INVITED TO U. OF INDIANA TO RECEIVE

HONORARY DEGREE BUT REGRETFULLY WILL BE UNABLE GO BECAUSE  
OF COMMONWEALTH MEETING IN LONDON.; SAID "NEXT YEAR I WILL  
BE COMING TO YOU FOR A VISA".

COMMENT: BANDA WAS IN FINE FORM - VERY ALERT, LUCID,  
FRIENDLY AND INTERESTING THIS TIME EVEN IN HIS HISTORICAL  
VIGNETTES WHICH ARE ALWAYS PREFACED BY A POINTED FINGER  
AND "I DON'T WANT TO BORE YOU BUT FOR YOUR BACKGROUND YOU SHOULD  
KNOW -". IN THSE ONE ON ONE TALKS HE CAN BE A VERY APPEALING  
OLD MAN AND IT IS EASY TO FORGET FOR THE MOMENT THE DARKER  
SIDE OF HIS CHARACTER.

DEPT. UNDOUBTEDLY HAS MANY CHANNELS TO SITHOLE, MUZOREWA AND  
SMITH AND WOULD ONLY NOTE THAT BANDA IS AVAILABLE SHOULD WE  
WANT TO USE HIM FOR ANY REASON.  
STEVENSON

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009